The Partners: Northwestern Medicine and Loyola University Chicago

Northwestern Medicine Academic Medical Center (NM-AMC), a Magnet recognized medical center in downtown Chicago, serves as the flagship institution of the Northwestern Medicine system. NM-AMC includes the 943-bed Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH), designated as a Level I trauma and stroke center and a Level III NICU, and the AMC Medical Group, which provides outpatient and ambulatory services. NM-AMC employs 4,400 nurses who serve a racially and ethnically diverse community and a large population of unhoused persons living in the surrounding neighborhood.

Loyola University Chicago is Chicago's Jesuit, Catholic university, embracing the Jesuit tradition by working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice, and faith. Located on the Lakeshore Campus just 7 miles from NM-AMC, the **Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing (Loyola Nursing)** is home to Loyola's baccalaureate nursing program. Ranked #13 by *US News and World Report* in 2026, the Loyola Nursing Bachelor of Science in Nursing program demonstrates excellent outcomes, including a 92.65% first-time NCLEX-RN pass rate over the last three years. A cornerstone of Loyola Nursing is its commitment to inclusive excellence, preparing a diverse and highly skilled nursing workforce equipped to care for individuals and communities across the health continuum.

The Partnership: Growing the Nursing Workforce Through a Shared Mission

The Loyola Nursing/NM-AMC academic-practice partnership, established in 2020, was designed to strengthen the nursing workforce pipeline, advance academic excellence, and ultimately improve patient care across communities served by both institutions. At the center of this collaboration is the Enhanced Clinical Experience (ECE) program, which addresses critical needs for both partners. As NM-AMC does not have an affiliated school of nursing, it faces challenges in developing a consistent pipeline of practice-ready graduates who are engaged with its mission and culture. At the same time, Loyola Nursing operates in a highly competitive clinical placement environment in Chicago, where securing high-quality student experiences can be challenging. The ECE program bridges these needs by offering a cohort of 40-48 Loyola Nursing students the opportunity to complete the majority of their clinical education, excluding pediatrics, at NM-AMC. This longitudinal model fosters deep integration into the NM culture and care environment, resulting in a strong pipeline of graduates who often transition directly into roles at NM-AMC or within the NM system. For Loyola Nursing, the program ensures consistent clinical placements that support student learning and professional formation. While several schools of nursing partner with NM-AMC for clinical placements, Loyola Nursing is a distinctive academic partner due to the alignment of mission and values. NM's *Patients First* mission closely aligns with the Jesuit value of *cura personalis*, or care of the whole person, which is central to the Loyola Nursing mission. Both institutions share a deep commitment to engagement, excellence, and advancing the health of all persons in the communities they serve.

Beyond the ECE program, the partnership continues to expand in meaningful ways. Loyola Nursing leadership is actively engaged with NM-AMC through participation in the Nurse Residency Stakeholder Advisory Council. NM-AMC also serves as a clinical site for Loyola Nursing Doctor of Nursing Practice scholarly projects, with mentorship from NM-AMC leaders to ensure alignment with NM quality improvement goals. Looking ahead, the partnership is focused on advancing innovative clinical education models, including expanded roles for NM-AMC nurses as Loyola Nursing clinical instructors and increased dissemination of outcomes to position this collaboration as a national exemplar of an academic-practice partnership. Together, Loyola Nursing and NM-AMC are building a sustainable, high-impact model to prepare practice-ready nurses and strengthen the transition to professional nursing practice.